

1 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2 FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

4 Plaintiff,

5 v.

6 CRIMINAL:12-154 (CCC)

7 [18]WILFREDO RODRÍGUEZ-RIVERA,

8 Defendant.

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10 MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
11 RE: RULE 11 PROCEEDINGS (PLEA OF GUILTY)

12 **I. Procedural Background**

13 On September 12, 2012, a grand jury returned a superseding indictment against [18] Wilfredo
14 Rodríguez-Rivera (hereinafter referred to as "defendant") and other individuals. (ECF No. 313.) The
15 defendant has agreed to plead guilty to count one of the superseding indictment. Count one charges that
16 beginning on a date unknown, but no later than in or about the year 2007, and continuing up to and until
17 the return of the indictment, in the Municipality of Jayuya and other areas nearby, in the District of
18 Puerto Rico, and elsewhere within the jurisdiction of this court, defendant [18] Wilfredo Rodríguez-
19 Rivera did knowingly and intentionally combine, conspire, and agree with others known and unknown
20 to the grand jury, to commit an offense against the United States, that is: to possess with intent to
21 distribute controlled substances, to wit: in excess of two-hundred and eighty (280) grams of cocaine
22 base (crack), a Schedule II Narcotic Drug Controlled Substance; in excess of one (1) kilogram of heroin,
23 a Schedule I, Narcotic Drug Controlled Substance; in excess of five (5) kilograms of cocaine, a
24 Schedule II, Narcotic Drug Controlled Substance; in excess of one hundred (100) kilograms of
25 marihuana, a Schedule I, Controlled Substance; within one thousand (1,000) feet of the real property
26 comprising the La Montaña Public Housing Project, a housing facility owned by a public housing
27 authority, the Hoyo Frío Ward and other areas nearby and within the Municipality of Jayuya, Puerto
28 Rico, all in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1), 846 and 860.

II. Consent to Proceed Before a Magistrate Judge

On October 2, 2013, while assisted by counsel, the defendant, by consent, appeared before the undersigned in order to change his previous not guilty plea to a plea of guilty as to count one of the superseding indictment. In open court the defendant was questioned as to the purpose of the hearing being held and was advised of: (a) the nature and purpose of the hearing; (b) the fact that all inquiries were to be conducted under oath and that it was expected that his answers would be truthful; (c) the potential consequences of lying under oath (such as a perjury charge); and (d) his right to have the change of plea proceedings presided by a district judge instead of a magistrate judge. The defendant was also explained the differences between the appointment and functions of the two. The defendant consented to proceed before the undersigned magistrate judge.

III. Proceedings Under Rule 11, Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure

A. Rule 11(c)(1) Requirements

Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure governs the acceptance of guilty pleas to federal criminal violations. Pursuant to Rule 11, in order for a plea of guilty to constitute a valid waiver of the defendant's right to trial, guilty pleas must be knowing and voluntary: "Rule 11 was intended to ensure that a defendant who pleads guilty does so with an 'understanding of the nature of the charge and consequences of his plea.'" United States v. Cotal-Crespo, 47 F.3d 1, 4 (1st Cir. 1995) (quoting McCarthy v. United States, 394 U.S. 459, 467 (1969)). [There are three core concerns in these proceedings]: 1) absence of coercion; 2) understanding of the charges; and 3) knowledge of the consequences of the guilty plea. United States v. Cotal-Crespo, 47 F.3d at 4 (citing United States v. Allard, 926 F.2d 1237, 1244-45 (1st Cir. 1991)). United States v. Hernández-Wilson, 186 F.3d 1, 5 (1st Cir. 1999).

B. Admonishment of Constitutional Rights

To assure defendant's understanding and awareness of his rights, defendant was advised of his right:

1. To remain silent at trial and be presumed innocent, since it is the government who has the burden of proving his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.
2. To testify or not to testify at trial, and that no adverse inference could be made in relation to his decision not to testify.

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2 3. To a speedy trial before a district judge and a jury, at which he would be entitled to see and
3 cross examine the government witnesses, present evidence on his behalf, and challenge the
4 government's evidence.

5 4. To have a unanimous verdict rendered by a jury of twelve persons which would have to be
6 convinced of defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt by means of admissible evidence.

7 5. To use the subpoena power of the court to compel the attendance of witnesses.

8 Upon listening to the defendant's responses, observing his demeanor and his speaking with his
9 attorney, that to the best of counsel's belief defendant had fully understood his rights, it is determined
10 that defendant is aware of his constitutional rights.

11 **C. Consequences of Pleading Guilty**

12 Upon advising defendant of his constitutional rights, he was further advised of the consequences
13 of pleading guilty. Specifically, defendant was advised that by pleading guilty and upon having his
14 guilty plea accepted by the court, he will be giving up the above rights and will be convicted solely on
15 his statement that he is guilty.

16 In response to further questioning, defendant was explained and he understood that if convicted
17 on count one as charged he will face the following penalties: a term of imprisonment of not less than
18 ten (10) years and not more than twice life imprisonment, a fine not to exceed twenty million dollars
19 (\$20,000,000), and a term of supervised release of at least ten (10) years. However, if the court accepts
20 the defendant's guilty plea and if the court accepts the amount of narcotics stipulated by the parties in
21 the plea agreement, that is at least five hundred (500) grams but less than two (2) kilograms of cocaine,
22 the penalty for the offense shall be the following: a term of imprisonment of not less than five (5) years
23 and not more than eighty (80) years, a fine not to exceed ten million dollars (\$10,000,000), and a term
24 of supervised release of at least eight (8) years.

25 The defendant was explained what the supervised release term means and was also made aware
26 that the court must impose a mandatory penalty assessment of one hundred dollars (\$100) per offense
27 pursuant Title 18, United States Code, Section 3013(a).

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The defendant was advised that the ultimate sentence was a matter solely for the court to decide in its discretion and that, even if the maximum imprisonment term and fine were to be imposed upon him, he later could not withdraw his guilty plea for that reason alone. Furthermore, the defendant was admonished of the fact that by pleading guilty he would not be allowed later on to withdraw his plea because he eventually might disagree with the sentence imposed, and that if he violates the conditions of supervised release, that privilege could be revoked and he could be required to serve an additional term of imprisonment. He was also explained that parole has been abolished. The defendant understood this.

D. Plea Agreement¹

The parties have entered into a written plea agreement that, upon being signed by the government, defense attorney and defendant, was filed and made part of the record. Defendant was clearly warned and recognized having understood that:

1. The plea agreement is not binding upon the sentencing court.

2. The plea agreement is an agreement between the defendant, defense counsel and the attorney for the government which is presented as a recommendation to the court in regards to the applicable sentencing adjustments and guidelines, which are advisory.

3. The agreement provides a sentencing recommendation and/or anticipated sentencing guideline computation, that can be either accepted or rejected by the sentencing court.

4. In spite of the plea agreement and any sentencing recommendation contained therein, the sentencing court retains full discretion to reject such plea agreement and impose any sentence up to the maximum possible penalty prescribed by statute.

Defendant acknowledged having understood this explanation.

¹ "Plea agreement" refers to the agreement and its supplement.

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E. Government's Evidence (Basis in Fact)

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The government presented a proffer of its evidence consistent with the version of facts of the
plea agreement with which the defendant concurred. Accordingly, it is determined that there is a basis
in fact and evidence to establish all the elements of the offense charged.

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F. Voluntariness

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The defendant accepted that no threats had been made to induce him to plead guilty and that he
did not feel pressured to plead guilty.

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G. Waiver of Appeal

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The defendant was explained, and he understood, that if the court accepts the plea agreement
and sentences him according to its terms, conditions and recommendations, he will be surrendering his
right to appeal the sentence and judgment in this case.

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IV. Conclusion

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The defendant, by consent, has appeared before me pursuant to Rule 11, Federal Rules of
Criminal Procedure, and has entered a plea of guilty as to count one of the superseding indictment.
After cautioning and examining the defendant under oath and in open court, concerning each of the
subject matters mentioned in Rule 11, as described in the preceding sections, I find that defendant
Wilfredo Rodríguez-Rivera is competent to enter this guilty plea, is aware of the nature of the offense
charged and the maximum statutory penalties that the same carries, understands that the charge is
supported by the government's evidence, has admitted to every element of the offense charged, and has
done so in an intelligent and voluntary manner with full knowledge of the consequences of his guilty
plea. Therefore, I recommend that the court accept the guilty plea of the defendant and that the
defendant be adjudged guilty as to count one of the superseding indictment.

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This report and recommendation is filed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B). Any objections
to the same must be specific and must be filed with the Clerk of Court within fourteen (14) days of its
receipt. Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). Failure to timely file specific objections to the report and

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recommendation is a waiver of the right to review by the district court. United States v. Valencia-
Copete, 792 F.2d 4 (1st Cir. 1986).

4 SO RECOMMENDED.

5 At San Juan, Puerto Rico, this 24th day of October, 2013.

6 s/Marcos E. López
7 U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE
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